Review of Income Level for OBC Reservation

*115. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gross annual income of Rs. 1,00,000 and above in respect of the persons belonging to OBC which was prescribed as early as in 1993 to exclude-them from the benefit of reservation still continues despite the fact that the salary of employees has been raised consequent upon the implementation of the recommendations of Fifth Pay Commission coupled with the substantial increase in the price index;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government propose to review that said gross income and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Constitution of a Review Committee to consider the issue of modification of the income criteria prescribed in Department of Personnel & Training OM No. 36012/22/93-East (SCT) dated 8.9.1993 is under consideration.

National Policy for Elders

*116. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have considered any National Policy to take care of the elder persons in the society; and?

(b) if so, what social welfare measures Government intend to take in case of the elderly people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To mark the International Year of Older persons, the Government announced the National Policy on Older Person. Several initiatives/measures have been taken in pursuance of the National Policy. Besides, the Ministry is also implementing schemes—"An integrated Programme for Older Persons" and "Scheme of Assistance fo • Panchayati Raj Institution/Voluntary Organisations/Self-Help Groups for construction of Old Age Homes/Multi Service Centres for Older Persons" Under the Integrated Programme for Older Persons financial assistance is provided to Voluntary Organisations for establishing and maintaining Old Age Homes, Day Care Centres and Mobile Medicare Units etc. The other schemes mentioned above aims at providing one time financial grant for construction of old age homes or multi-service centres. The details of these and other welfare measures are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

(i) A National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) was constitued in May, 1999 to operationalise the National Policy.

(ii) Both the schemes for older persons were reviewed and revised during 1998-99 to make them more flexible and to allow a wide range of initiatives to promote best interests of older persons. The other scheme of grant in aid for construction of old age homes multi-service centre was revised to enhance the one time construction grant from Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 30 lakh to eligible organizations.

(iii) In order to examine the policy questions connected with old age income security a national project titled "OASIS" (Old Age Social and Income Security) was commissioned in August, 1998. The first Report of the Committee was formally released by MOS (SJ&E) in February, 1999. It contains recommendations which will enable the members of Provident Funds and Employee Pension Scheme, as well as Public Provident Fund subscribers to greatly benefit from increased returns through professional fund management and prudently liberalised investment guidelines. This report is being examined by the Ministry of Finance and in the meantime second and final report of project OASIS is being finalised.

(iv) On the request of MOS to Union Law Minister, Chief Justice of India and Chief Justice of all the High Courts in the country, instructions have been issued by the Honble Chief Justice of India to all Chief Justices of High Courts for expenditious disposal of cases involving older persons 60 years and above.

(v) On the request of this Ministry, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have issued instructions to all State Governments to ensure provision of separate queues for older persons in hospitals at every stage and the other request of the Ministry for inclusion of geriatrics in the medical curricula of the country is under their consideration.

(vi) At the initiative of this Ministry, a Telephone Helpline has been started by an NGO called Agewell with the financial assistance from the Ministry.

(vii) At Secretariat for NCOP which would also process and take follow-up action on the representations/complaints/ grievances of older persons has been established by Age Well Foundation on the initiative and with the financial assistance of this Ministry.

Cviii) Ministry of Telecommunications have announced grant of telephone connections to older persons on priority basis.

(ix) Ministry of Rural Development is considering launching of a new scheme called ANNAPURNA under which free foodgrains upto 10 Kgs are to be provided to poor older persons.

Staff Strength of Sail

*117. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India is overstaffed;

(b) if so, the steps proposed to reduce the strength to make SAIL viable; and